My dear Governor,

Your telegram 200 has just come in and I am circulating it to the Committee of Council for Europe so that they should have it before them when they come to consider the recommendation of the Welfare Sub-Committee at the meeting on the 13th instant.

But the line taken in this telegram does not seem to me very realistic.

The Atlantic City Resolutions were put together in great haste and they need to be interpreted with some discretion. We here have long felt that the provisions of the Financial Plan should be regarded as applicable to the general supply programme rather than to health, welfare or displaced persons. I raised the matter with you as long ago as last August and the Administrative Council put it forward again in telegram 1030. After your visit to France we understood that you were ready to agree that limited emergency services could be undertaken by U.N.R.A.R.A. Now it appears that a distinction is to be drawn between displaced persons and welfare (or health) services to the paying countries. This is likely
likely to cause a good deal of political feeling as it may result in Allied displaced persons in these countries getting more favourable treatment than the victims of war.

There are two different aspects of the question. First as regards the provision of supplies. All the paying Governments have asked us to provide supplies, but up to date we have been able to do extremely little. We have no blankets and very little clothing and we have great difficulty in getting such things as cod liver oil which is short here. We have had a large organisation in Washington which is presumed to be getting supplies, but the results as seen from here are very definitely disappointing. It may be that this is due to the refusal of the Combined Boards to grant us allocations, but if so the question should have been raised with them at as high a level as possible and pressed hard. But there seems to be a good deal of difficulty in getting approval, e.g. for the purchase of Spanish blankets, which could be arranged subject to your approval. If supplies had been obtained and shipped over here, even on a small scale, to meet these welfare demands, we could now get them across to the war areas where they are desperately needed.
Secondly, there is the financial aspect. These Governments are all still willing to pay for bulk supplies and very likely they can be got to pay for welfare supplies too. But it is important that the delivery of supplies should not be held up until financial terms have been agreed. Otherwise this means reference to the supply authorities and finance ministries in the various countries, and during the period of interdepartmental discussion the people are left to suffer. No doubt you will say Governments that these ought to have a more efficient machinery, but if Washington had been occupied for four years by the enemy I doubt if the administration there would be working very effectively. I still feel that we should be ready to offer any welfare supplies that we can get hold of to these countries without prejudice to questions of finance which could be settled later.

My own feeling is that we should be prepared to provide these emergency supplies without asking for repayment which is what you propose to do in regard to displaced persons. In one particular case we ought clearly to offer our services free, i.e. in the sorting and baling of donated clothing. When clothing is donated to us and collected by voluntary organisations, we are playing a very small part in the business and we ought to be
able to provide these services free. I have checked up what the cost would work out at here and they tell me that while it is difficult to give a firm estimate it should not be more than three or four cents a pound. If we pay this we can transfer the stuff to Entr' Aide without any difficulty, but if we ask them to pay in advance they will have to get the foreign exchange out of the Finance Ministry which holds things up.

I cannot say what line the Committee of Council for Europe will take, but I hope that they will press for an alteration of policy if you regard the Atlantic City Resolutions as precluding you from giving any help in regard to these services to paying countries. It is certain that there is great distress and considerable mortality in these areas and U.N.R.R.A. is doing nothing to help: indeed, the Quakers, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army have all done more than U.N.R.R.A. I am told that U.N.R.R.A. is completely discredited in these countries and if we can nothing I do not believe that we will be able in future ever to reestablish our position.

Some of the American journalists now on a visit to France called in the other day and said that their impression was that /impediments
impediments had been deliberately created so that U.N.R.R.A. should never work. There certainly are plenty of impediments; but I do not believe that they were deliberately created and I am sure that if you would cut out some of the legalism and authorise operations within reasonable limits, you would have the full support of the Governments and U.N.R.R.A. would have a chance of doing the job it was created to do.

Yours sincerely,

F.W. Eriksen